

What we need are Fed nominees who will be independent. We need nominees who will stand up to the chairman if they believe he is wrong.

I do not believe Dr. Ferguson will assert that independence. I believe his answer to my question in the Banking Committee proves that.

For this reason, I reluctantly vote "no" on the nomination of Dr. Roger Ferguson, to a 14-year term as a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

Mr. BREAUX. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Roger Walter Ferguson, Jr., to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System? On this question the yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 243 Exec.]

YEAS—97

Akaka	Durbin	McCain
Allard	Edwards	Mikulski
Allen	Ensign	Miller
Baucus	Enzi	Murkowski
Bayh	Feingold	Murray
Bennett	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Fitzgerald	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Frist	Nickles
Bond	Graham	Reed
Boxer	Gramm	Reid
Breaux	Grassley	Roberts
Brownback	Gregg	Rockefeller
Burns	Hagel	Santorum
Byrd	Harkin	Sarbanes
Campbell	Hatch	Schumer
Cantwell	Hollings	Sessions
Carnahan	Hutchinson	Shelby
Carper	Hutchison	Smith (NH)
Chafee	Inhofe	Smith (OR)
Cleland	Inouye	Snowe
Clinton	Jeffords	Specter
Cochran	Johnson	Stabenow
Collins	Kennedy	Stevens
Conrad	Kerry	Thomas
Corzine	Kohl	Thompson
Craig	Kyl	Thurmond
Crapo	Landrieu	Torricelli
Daschle	Leahy	Voinovich
Dayton	Levin	Warner
DeWine	Lieberman	Wellstone
Dodd	Lincoln	Wyden
Domenici	Lott	
Dorgan	Lugar	

NAYS—2

Bunning McConnell

NOT VOTING—1

Helms

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I hope everyone recognizes the tremendous tragedy we sadly heard of yesterday in Baltimore. A train derailed in a tunnel. The fire is still burning. The hydrochloric acid is still leaking from that tank. Last night, the city of Baltimore, one of the largest cities in America, was closed down. The Baltimore Orioles were in the middle of a double-header. They stopped the game and sent everybody home.

The reason I mention this is there has been a mad clamor about the nuclear power industry and shipping nuclear waste. The nuclear industry doesn't care where it goes, although they are focused on Nevada for the present time. I think everyone needs to recognize that transporting hazardous materials is very difficult. If people think hydrochloric acid is bad—which it is—think about how bad nuclear waste is. A speck the size of a pinpoint would kill a person. We are talking about transporting some 70,000 tons of it all across America.

I hope before everybody starts flexing their muscles about the reestablishment of nuclear power in this country that we recognize first there has to be something done with the dangerous waste associated with nuclear power.

It is estimated that some 60 million people live within a mile of the routes that may be proposed for transporting this nuclear waste by train or truck. Not to mention the problems related to terrorism, which we have discussed at some length on this floor in previous debates.

We should leave nuclear waste where it is. Eminent scientists say it is safe. It could be stored onsite in storage containers for a fraction of the cost of a permanent repository. It would be much less dangerous. It could be stored relatively safely for 100 years, the scientists say. During that period of time, we might develop a breakthrough idea as to what could be done safely with these spent fuel rods.

RADIATION EXPOSURE CLAIMS

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I would like to speak today about a

group of Americans, some of whom are in my State. Some are in Arizona. Some are in Wyoming. Some are in Connecticut. These people have only one thing in common: they are the beneficiaries of an American law that is called RCRA, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. A number of us were part of getting that law passed. It was a recognition that there were certain Americans, including uranium miners and some others, who very well might have been overexposed to low-level radiation when they were mining in uranium mines that weren't aerated—where they did not have enough air conditioning and not enough clean air. They may have very well during their lives breathed in radiation and contracted serious illnesses. Some might have died. Some may today be suffering from cancer or other diseases.

In any event, this law was passed. It was kind of heralded as a very good commitment by the Government and very simple. You didn't have to get a lawyer for these claims. It was limited to \$100,000 in exchange for making it simple and setting some standards: You can come in and prove your case. You could probably prove your claim in a relatively short period of time.

Lo and behold, if Congress put the money up, you would get your check. You could get it as a widow. You could get it as one who was sick. You could get it as anyone entitled to it under the statute. It worked pretty well for a while.

Then something very ghastly happened for the beneficiaries. Pretty soon, they started going to the Justice Department which has charge of these claims and asking them for money.

The Justice Department told this growing group of Americans: We don't have any money.

They said: What do you mean? Here is the law.

They said: Well, Congress didn't put up the money. We ran out. So you will not be worried, why don't we give you an IOU. Here is your assurance that the Government says it owes you \$100,000.

These people started coming to see their Senators—not only me but Senator BINGAMAN and other Senators—saying, time is passing. I am getting sicker. I may even die, and I have an IOU from this great big American Government. Why can't they pay me?

Let me say in this Chamber that it is embarrassing to say it even here, but it is more embarrassing to say it to the victims. There is a big series of discussions going on between committees—even appropriations subcommittees—as to which one ought to appropriate the money.

In the meantime, no money is appropriated. People walk around with the IOUs filing their claims, and they are working on them day by day. And another law passes. It is for a larger group of Americans who come in to adjudicate their claims for exposure to low-level radiation. It is for radiation where we had uranium in a Richmond,